

IN THE CLAIMS:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A holder for a scouring device comprising:

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- a) a base;
 - b) a pair of opposed legs extending from the base, each leg comprising a central portion and an end portion; and
 - c) a gripping assembly positioned at the end portion of each of the opposed legs and including a gripping means comprising a plurality of spaced apart grippers movable in unison from a first position sufficient to enter the scouring device at the same time to secure the holder to the scouring device wherein the scouring device is held by the holder without the application of pressure by the user to a second position wherein the user maintains pressure on the holder to release the grippers at the same time from the scouring device without the user having to touch the scouring device during movement from the first position to the second position, said grippers engaging the scouring device in a manner such that the scouring device may clean or scour a utensil upon application of pressure by the user while being retained in operative engagement by the grippers during the scouring or cleaning operation.

Claim 2 (original): The holder of claim 1 wherein the gripping means comprises a plurality of spaced apart teeth.

Claim 3 (original): The holder of claim 1 wherein the gripping means comprises a plurality of hooks.

Claim 4 (original): The holder of claim 1 wherein the base, opposed legs and gripping assembly have a unitary construction.

Claim 5 (original): The holder of claim 1 wherein the central portion of the opposed legs comprises a gripping section wherein one of said legs is engaged by a user's thumb and the other of said legs is engaged by at least one finger of the same hand as the user's thumb.

Claim 6 (original): The holder of claim 5 wherein the opposed legs extend toward each other at the central portion.

Claim 7 (original): The holder of claim 6 wherein the opposed legs extend away from each other at the end portions thereof.

Claim 8 (original): The holder of claim 7 wherein the gripping means comprises a finger guard extending in a plane substantially horizontally to an upper surface of the holder and a scouring device engaging portion extending from beneath the finger guard downwardly to thereby enter into and grippingly engage the scouring device.

Claim 9 (original): The holder of claim 8 wherein the scouring device engaging portion is a row of spaced apart teeth.

Claim 10 (original): The holder of claim 1 wherein the base lies in a plane substantially parallel to an upper surface of the scouring device.

Claim 11 (original) The holder of claim 1 wherein the central portion of the opposed legs has an uneven surface to facilitate operative engagement of the holder by the user.

Claim 12 (original): The holder of claim 1 wherein the holder is made from at least one flexible material selected from the group consisting of plastic, metal and rubber.

Claim 13 (currently amended) A method of gripping a scouring device comprising:

- 1) placing the scouring device in contact with a holder comprising:
 - a) a base;
 - b) a pair of opposed legs extending from the base, each leg comprising a central portion and an end portion; and
 - c) a gripping assembly positioned at the end portion and including a gripping means comprising a plurality of spaced apart grippers movable in unison from a first position sufficient to enter the securing device at the same time to secure the holder to the scouring device to a second position to release the scouring device,
- 2) applying pressure to the opposed legs at said central portion to

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bring the opposed legs closer together, and

3) releasing the pressure on the opposed legs to thereby enable the gripping means to move to said first position to secure the holder to the scouring device in a manner such that the scouring device may clean or scour a utensil upon application of pressure by the user while being retained in operative engagement by the grippers during the scouring or cleaning operation.

Claim 14 (original): The method of claim 13 further comprising:

applying pressure to the opposed legs at said central portion to bring the opposed legs closer together a sufficient distance so that the gripping means moves to the second position thereby releasing the scouring device from the holder.